
Districting in Chula Vista: How it works and How to participate

What is districting?

- In a district-based electoral system, representatives are elected from districts.
- Districting is the process of drawing the boundaries that divide the City's population into the four districts.
- A Citizen Commission is charged with constructing the City Council boundaries.
- Starting in 2016, the Chula Vista City Council will be elected by the voters in four districts instead of all voters in the City.

Introduction to the Districting Commission:

- 7 members:
 - ❑ Chair: Jerome Torres
 - ❑ Vice-Chair: Reynaldo Monzon
 - ❑ Commissioner: Rita Buencamino-Andrews
 - ❑ Commissioner: Cheryl Goddard
 - ❑ Commissioner: John Korey
 - ❑ Commissioner: Bill Richter
 - ❑ Commissioner: Bernardo Vasquez

How were the Commissioners selected?

- Applications to the Charter Commission
- Charter Commission picked 10, then randomly selected 4; 4 selected picked 3 from remaining pool; reflect diversity of the City
- Various conflict of interest exclusions
- Commissioners had to demonstrate diverse skills including analytic ability and impartiality
- Commissioners may not run for City Council for 4 years after service concludes

What does the Commission do and When?

- **Hold public hearings:**
 - 5 public input hearings in April 2015
 - Upon conclusion, 2 line drawing meetings in April
- **Collect data through Community Input:**
 - at hearings, through mailed and emailed submissions
- **Construct and approve a Draft Districting Plan**
 - At the line drawing meetings on April 24 and 25
- **Hold feedback and additional input hearings on Draft:**
 - 5 hearings in May to collect comments
 - Make modifications to Draft Plan on June 8
- **Approve a Recommended Districting Plan and submit to the City Council for consideration**

Commission Meetings and Hearings:

- A regular Commission meeting is scheduled for:
 - April 13
- Public input workshops are on:
 - Tuesday, April 7 – 6 pm Bonita Vista Middle School
 - Wednesday, April 8 – 6 pm Parkway Women’s Center
 - Thursday, April 9 – 6 pm Otay Ranch Library ‘Hub’
 - Saturday, April 11 – 9 am MACC Charter School
 - Saturday April 11 – 3 pm Greg Rogers Elementary
- Line Drawing meetings are on:
 - Friday April 24, 6 pm City Council Chambers
 - Saturday April 25, 10 am City Council Chambers

Commission Meetings and Hearings:

- Public Input Workshops and Feedback hearings on the Draft Plan are scheduled for:
 - Tuesday, May 12 – 6 pm
 - Wednesday, May 13 – 6 pm
 - Thursday May 14 – 6 pm
 - Saturday May 16 – 9 am
 - Saturday May 16 – 3 pm
- An additional hearing to make modifications to the Draft Plan will be held on
 - Monday June 8 – 6 pm
- Other meetings may be scheduled. Please check City website for dates (<http://chulavistaca.gov/districting>)

How will the Commission decide where to draw district lines?

The Chula Vista Charter contains criteria that the Commission must use to draw district lines.

1. Districts shall have reasonably equal population as required by the Federal and State Constitutions
2. District boundaries shall be geographically compact and contiguous
3. Districts shall follow visible features and boundaries when possible
4. Districts shall respect communities of interest to the extent practicable
5. Disregard incumbents, candidates, political parties

Note: criteria are not ranked

Criteria: US Constitution & Equal Population

- 14th Amendment (Equal Protection)
 - Interpreted to require reasonably equal district populations, e.g., “one person, one vote”
 - prohibits intentional discrimination because it is a violation of equal protection (the jurisdiction is treating residents differently because of race, and thus not according them equal protection under the law).
- 15th Amendment
 - Bans racial discrimination in voting

What is the Ideal Population per district?

- Ideal population for each type of district:
- $\text{Total population} \div \# \text{ of districts} = \text{Ideal POP}$
- Chula Vista total Population from 2010 Census: 243,916
- Ideal population for Chula Vista City Council Districts?
 - $\text{Total Population} \div \text{four districts} = \text{Ideal POP}$
 - $243,916 \div 4 = 60,979$

How equal is equal?

- Different standards for different jurisdictions
 - Congressional Districts must be strictly equal
 - Local jurisdictions, like Chula Vista, have more flexibility
- Districts must be reasonably equal
 - Some deviation above and/or below the ideal population is allowed
 - Equal population generally subject to VRA compliance (Generally $\pm 5\%$)
 - Ideal population per district: $60,979 \pm 3,048$ persons

Voting Rights Act, Section 2

- Prohibits the denial or abridgement of voting rights on the basis of *race or language minority status*. (42 USC § 1973)
 - VRA defines “language minority” as Asian, Native American, Alaskan Native or Spanish heritage. Does not apply to other language groups.
- Prohibits practices that have the purpose or effect of discriminating on the basis of race or language minority status.
- Applies nationwide, to ALL jurisdictions that conduct elections.

VRA and districting: Vote Dilution

- Electoral systems can limit the “ability to elect a candidate of choice” by a protected class of voters in various ways:
 - Example: at-large election systems can make it impossible for even a large minority group to elect a candidate of choice, when the majority votes against them.
 - Example: single-member districts can be drawn in ways that minimize voters’ ability to elect a candidate of choice.
- Systems that limit ability to elect in this way are said to “dilute” minority voting strength.

Section 2 and Districting: Methods of Vote Dilution

- A districting plan can dilute minority voting strength through two main ways:
- “Cracking”
 - Dividing up a politically viable population concentration so it doesn’t constitute a majority in any district.
- “Packing”
 - Drawing high proportion minority population into one district when it could be politically viable in more than one district

Charter Criterion: Compactness

- Charter: “District boundaries shall be geographically compact”
- Addresses the geography of the district
- Many different measures developed
- “eyeball approach” “appearances do matter”
 - (Shaw v Reno)

Compactness

- Assumed to “guard against all types of gerrymandering” “drastic departures from compactness are a signal that something may be amiss*”
 - Many different ways to measure compactness, but most common complaints come from appearances:
 - Does a district look funny?
 - Often hard to tell without knowing more whether a “funny looking” or “ugly” district is problematic....

(*Karcher v. Daggett)

Charter Criterion: Contiguity

- Charter: “Districts shall be contiguous”
- Definition: A contiguous district is one in which all parts are connected to each other
in other words:
 - A district in which one may travel from any location to any other location without crossing the district boundary

Charter Criterion: Communities of Interest (COIs)

- What is a COI? It is a geographic area comprised of residents who share similar interests including, but not limited to, social, cultural, ethnic, geographic or economic interests, or formal government or quasi-governmental relationships.
- What is it NOT? COIs can not include relationships with parties, incumbents, or candidates

COI: Defined by Those Familiar with the Community

- Law does not limit the kinds of interests that may bind a community.
- CV Charter provides guidance/examples
- It is up to those who live in or work with communities to identify and establish the interests that unite it.
- Interests need not be limited to current situation, but can also include common goals.
- The Commission needs your input to define Communities of Interest in Chula Vista!

How can you document a Community of Interest?

Please answer the following questions:

- What bonds the community?
- Where is the community located in the City?
 - Outline what defines the COI:
 - What is your mission or commonality?
 - Explain what is different outside of the boundaries of your Community of Interest
 - Create a map of the boundaries (use Google maps, GIS system, paper, etc.) or
 - Write down the boundaries

Common Interests, Examples

■ Economic interests:

- ❑ Current situation -- common employment or economic opportunities (or lack thereof).
- ❑ Goals -- expanding opportunities, development, bringing in businesses and jobs, etc.

■ Social interests:

- ❑ Current -- schools, culture, transportation, parks
- ❑ Goals -- improving recreation opportunities or public safety, etc.

Community of Interest definitions may include:

- Organizing around schools, school districts
- Transportation hubs
- Community Centers
- Dog parks

- Race and Ethnicity
 - Additional factors:
 - ❑ Shared experiences or history
 - ❑ Access (or lack of) to education
 - ❑ Higher number of kids per household/younger overall population
 - ❑ Shared languages and cultures

Charter Criterion: Ignore Politics

- Disregard where incumbents or candidates live.
- Disregard political parties
 - Prohibits intentional benefit/harm

Why should YOU participate in districting?

- To give your community a voice and make sure it has equal access to the political process.
- To encourage citizens to register, vote, and remain politically engaged.
- To help shape a districting plan that provides communities a meaningful opportunity to elect candidates who represent their interests on issues that are important to their lives.

Take advantage of the opportunities to participate in all phases of the districting process!

Districting Access Sites

Chula Vista Library Locations:

- Civic Center Branch – 365 F Street
 - South Chula Vista Branch – 389 Orange Ave
 - Otay Ranch Branch – 2015 Birch Rd, Ste 409
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- Meeting space; internet access; information available and more

How to Get involved – How to Learn more

To participate in the process: testify, submit written testimony, send supporting information to the Districting Commission.

Please provide information about your Community of Interest, or other topics the commission needs to know about as soon as possible. The first deadline for consideration in the Draft Plan is April 20, 2015.

Submit information at a hearing, by mail or drop off at the City Attorney's office at City Hall, or email to: districting@chulavistaca.gov

Please check the City's website for news and upcoming meetings: www.chulavistaca.gov/districting

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!